

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A metallic material for fuel cells comprising:

0.20 percent by mass or less of C;

0.02 to 1.0 percent by mass of Si;

0.1 to 2.0 percent by mass or less of Mn;

10 to ~~40~~ 20.45 percent by mass of Cr;

0.03 to 5.0 percent by mass of Mo;

0.1 to 3.0 percent by mass of Nb;

at least one element selected from the group consisting of Sc, Y, La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Pm, Sm, Zr, and Hf in a total of 0.005 to 1.0 percent by mass or less; and

the balance composed of Fe and inevitable impurities;

wherein 1) $0.1 \leq \text{Mo/Nb} \leq 30$ is satisfied,

2) a precipitate containing Fe, Cr and Si at contents on the basis of the metallic material satisfies the following equation (1):

$$\text{[precipitated Fe]} + \text{[precipitated Cr]} + \text{[precipitated Si]} \geq 0.01 \text{ percent by mass ... (1)}$$

wherein,

[precipitated Fe]: content (percent by mass) of Fe in the precipitate;

[precipitated Cr]: content (percent by mass) of Cr in the precipitate; and

[precipitated Si]: content (percent by mass) of Si in the precipitate, and

3) in use at a cell operating temperature of 800°C for at least 1,000 hours or more, the Fe, Cr and Si contents in the precipitate on the basis of the metallic material satisfy the following equation (2):

$$\text{[precipitated Fe]} + \text{[precipitated Cr]} + \text{[precipitated Si]} \geq 0.03 \text{ percent by mass ... (2)}$$

wherein,

[precipitated Fe]: content (percent by mass) of Fe in the precipitate;

[precipitated Cr]: content (percent by mass) of Cr in the precipitate; and

[precipitated Si]: content (percent by mass) of Si in the precipitate.

2-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The metallic material for fuel cells according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 3, wherein the metallic material for fuel cells is a hot-rolled material.

5. (Currently Amended) The metallic material for fuel cells according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 3, wherein the metallic material for fuel cells is a cold-rolled material.

6. (Original) The metallic material for fuel cells according to claim 4 or 5, wherein the metallic material is further subjected to a precipitation treatment so that the Fe, Cr and Si contents in the precipitate on the basis of the metallic material satisfy the following equation (3):

$$[\text{precipitated Fe}] + [\text{precipitated Cr}] + [\text{precipitated Si}] \geq 0.02 \text{ percent by mass} \quad \dots (3)$$

wherein,

[precipitated Fe]: content (percent by mass) of Fe in the precipitate;

[precipitated Cr]: content (percent by mass) of Cr in the precipitate; and

[precipitated Si]: content (percent by mass) of Si in the precipitate.

7. (Currently Amended) The metallic material for fuel cells according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 6, wherein the metallic material for fuel cells is used for solid-oxide fuel cells.

8. (Currently Amended) The metallic material for fuel cells according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 6, wherein the metallic material for fuel cells is used for interconnects of solid-oxide fuel cells.

9. (Currently Amended) A solid-oxide fuel cell using the metallic material for fuel cells according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 1 to 8.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a metallic material for fuel cells comprising:

re-heating a steel material, if required;

hot-rolling the steel material; and

annealing and ~~pickling~~ pickling the hot-rolled sheet, if required;

wherein the steel material is adjusted to contain:

0.20 percent by mass or less of C;

0.02 to 1.0 percent by mass of Si;

0.1 to 2.0 percent by mass ~~or less~~ of Mn;

10 to 40 20.45 percent by mass of Cr;

0.03 to 5.0 percent by mass of Mo;

0.1 to 3.0 percent by mass of Nb;

at least one of element selection from Sc, Y, La, Ce, Pr, Nd, Pm, Sm, Zr, and Hf in a total of 0.005 to 1.0 percent by mass ~~or less~~; and

the balance composed of Fe and inevitable impurities; and

$0.1 \leq \text{Mo/Nb} \leq 30$ is satisfied, wherein the metallic material for fuel cells further comprises a precipitate containing Fe, Cr and Si at contents on the basis of the metallic material satisfying the following equation (1):

$[\text{precipitated Fe}] + [\text{precipitated Cr}] + [\text{precipitated Si}] \geq 0.01$ percent by mass ... (1)

wherein,

$[\text{precipitated Fe}]$: content (percent by mass) of Fe in the precipitate;

[precipitated Cr]: content (percent by mass) of Cr in the precipitate; and

[precipitated Si]: content (percent by mass) of Si in the precipitate.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for producing a metallic material for fuel cells~~ according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~and 11~~, further comprising cold-rolling or cold-rolling, annealing, and then pickling.

13. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for producing a metallic material for fuel cells~~ according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~and 12~~, further comprising performing a precipitation treatment of the metallic material for fuel cells so that the Fe, Cr and Si contents in the precipitate on the basis of the metallic material satisfy the following equation (3):

$$[\text{precipitated Fe}] + [\text{precipitated Cr}] + [\text{precipitated Si}] \geq 0.02 \text{ percent by mass} \quad \dots (3)$$

wherein,

[precipitated Fe]: content (percent by mass) of Fe in the precipitate;

[precipitated Cr]: content (percent by mass) of Cr in the precipitate; and

[precipitated Si]: content (percent by mass) of Si in the precipitate.

14. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for producing a metallic material for fuel cells~~ according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~and 13~~, further comprising pressing the metallic material for fuel cells.

15. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for producing a metallic material for fuel cells~~ according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~and 13~~, further comprising cutting the metallic material for fuel cells.

16. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for producing a metallic material for fuel cells~~ according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~and 13~~, further comprising corrugating the metallic material for fuel cells.

17. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for producing a metallic material for fuel cells~~ according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~and 13~~, further comprising etching the metallic material for fuel cells.

18. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for producing a metallic material for fuel cells~~ according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~and 17~~, wherein the metallic material for fuel cells is used for solid-oxide fuel cells.

19. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for producing a metallic material for fuel cells~~ according to ~~any one of claims~~ claim 10 ~~and 17~~, wherein the metallic material for fuel cells is used for interconnects of solid-oxide fuel cells.